



OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

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Abstract:

Education in the broadest sense is aimed at helping individuals become more productive members of the society. At the heart of the whole pedagogy is Guidance and Counselling, which has been positively correlated with effective learning outcomes. Primarily, School Guidance and Counselling services are geared towards helping students know themselves, the world around them and make optimal decisions for enhanced future for all. This paper presents guidance and counselling services provided in the school system. It contends that since counselling services are expedient for everyone, all through life, the Counsellor, who is the service provider, needs to be always on top of his/her job.

Keywords: School, Guidance, Counselling, Services

1. Introduction

Just like it happened in the United States, and other parts of the West, the evolution of Guidance and Counselling as a professional discipline in Nigeria was motivated by a combination of philanthropic, social, historical, educational and other environmental factors. Indeed, Guidance and Counselling's antecedents in Nigeria are traceable to the efforts of a group of concerned Reverend Sisters who worked with pupils at the Saint Theresa's College, Oke Ado, Ibadan in 1957. This later crystallized into what was later called "The Nigerian Careers Council," with Mrs. Oriwariye and others collaborating with the Sisters to establish the Council. Possibly spurred by the result of the voluntary

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activities and the evident need for vocational guidance for adolescents and the youths in general, the Federal Government of Nigeria appointed Mr. C.I. Berepiki in 1961 to serve as vocational guidance officer in the Federal Ministry of Education. This was a significant step towards the formal development of counselling services in the country.

With the inauguration of the Counselling Association of Nigeria in 1977 at the University of Ibadan with a United States trained Counsellor and academic Professor Isaac Olu Makinde as its first President, one can rightly say that Guidance and Counselling, indeed, has come a long way in Nigeria. Presently, many Nigerian universities run courses in Counselling Psychology, some at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels while others run only postgraduate programmes. Professional Counselors' umbrella body, Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) coordinates training and licensure of guidance counsellors in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Framework

School counselling services are primarily organized to help individual students maximize the educational privilege. Odeleye (2012) submits that the Guidance Counsellor is professionally trained and equipped to help the individual do three (3) things: first, to gain invaluable understanding of himself/herself; secondly, to master the ambient social environment and thirdly, to make well-informed and positive choices for himself/herself. Thus, school counselling has always been interested in the individual student, get to know him/her and assist him/her to optimize life's choices. Generally, the thrust of the Counsellor's work is in helping the individual become more viable member of the larger society. For the purpose of this discourse, the Client-Centred Theory by Carl Rogers is the theoretical framework.

2.1 Client-Centred Theory

For Carl Rogers, the individuality of a person is priceless. It could be said that he was greatly influenced by his American heritage. Rogers emphasized the need to deal with everyone at his/her level of need. He conceptualized a view of human beings as having basic rationality, socialization, progressive and realistic goals. Consequently, he exemplified the four suppositions:

a) *Belief in the Dignity and Worth of an Individual*

Rogers posited that all individuals should have the right to their opinions and thoughts. It was his belief that individuals should control their destinies and should also be free to pursue whatever they are interested in. These, according to him, promote democratic ideals.

b) *A Perceptual View of Behaviour*

Rogers was of the opinion that the way individuals behave actually represent the perceptions they hold about themselves and the environment they are. He contended that an individual's self-concept is a reflection of his perceptions.

c) *Tendency towards Self-Actualisation*

Rogers placed much premium on the significance of Self. He stressed that the Self was an important element in the experience of the client. He emphasized that individuals have specific needs and motives. He maintained that the more individuals strive to meet those needs, the more they enhance their self-concept or self-esteem, thus ultimately enabling them to self-actualize themselves.

d) *A belief that individuals are basically good and trustworthy*

The premise here is that people are intrinsically good. In his theory, Carl Rogers submitted that though sometime individuals behave untowardly by showing deceit, hatred and wickedness, the negative behaviour arose out of their defensive bid.

2.2 Some other concepts of Rogerian theory

In order to better understand the Rogerian client-centred theory, it is expedient to delve into other concepts of the theory. This will further elucidate Carl Rogers' concept of human personality.

- a) *All individuals exist in a continually changing world of experience of which they are the centre.*
- b) *Individuals react to reality as they perceive it, and not as significant others perceive it for them.*
- c) *Behaviour is basically the goal-directed attempt of individuals to satisfy their needs as experienced in their perceived environment.*
- d) *The traditional point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual.*
- e) *The ways individuals behave are consistent with their self-concept.*
- f) *When inconsistencies occur, these are as a result of a sharp split between self-concept and the experiences of the individuals.*
- g) *If the incongruence between the individuals and their experiences got widened, it could lead to anxiety.*
- h) *In order to put the anxiety at ease or equilibrated stage, the self-concept must become more congruent with the individuals' actual experiences.*
- i) *An adjusted individual is wholly open to wide experiences and puts up no defenses.*

3. Approaches to Counseling

Counselling methods are generally defined along three (3) perspectives, namely Directive, Indirective (or Non-Directive) and Eclectic.

The Directive method is also known as Counsellor-centered approach requires that the Counsellor takes center stage in the psychotherapeutic process and directs the course of the relationship. On the superficial, this method seems contrary to the spirit of counselling. However, it must be noted that there are instances when all the client requires is guidance to let him/her know what to do under certain circumstances.

On the other hand, in the *Indirect Counselling Approach*, the counsellee holds the ace. The counsellee is involved in every segment of the relationship. S/he cooperates with the Counsellor to determine the direction of the psychotherapy. The counsellee is allowed and encouraged to bare his/her mind on matters of interest to him/her. All the Counsellor does is to give prompts, verbal cues and non-verbal cues to enable the client to pour out his/her mind.

The third approach (*Ecclectic*) is a combination of both indirect and directive methods. From the author's professional experience, the eclectic option could be the best if utilized by a guidance Counsellor who knows his/her onions. However, it is suggested that the primary principle in choosing counselling approach is that the Counsellor should work towards mastering each of the counselling methods.

The directive counsellor focuses attention primarily on identifying and analyzing the problem and finding an appropriate solution to it. S/he tends to make use of test data, school records, and reports, and to be more disposed to giving advice and information based on such data. Coleman (2009) submits that Directive Counselling is the method most commonly used by counsellors in school settings. In school setting, Directive Counselling may actually be the most successful. The counsellor is able to help individual pupils with information on vocations, study habits and relationship skills among others.

The Indirect approach is more effective in the treatment of many types of emotional problems. The counsellee takes the centre stage in Non-Directive Counselling since s/he has the information and the counsellor needs to listen. Some students come to the counsellor with emotional issues and all they need is someone to listen and give some comforting words. Although there are many proponents of *Indirective counselling*, Carl Rogers is best known, because he started the movement and gave it leadership for more than six decades (Rogers, 1942).

The aim of *Indirective counselling* is to help the student "to become a better organized person, oriented around healthy goals which s/he has clearly seen and definitely chosen". It aims to provide the student with a united purpose, the courage to

meet life and the obstacles that it presents. Consequently, the counsellee takes from his counselling contacts, not necessarily a clear-cut solution for each of his/her problems, but the ability to meet his/her problems in a constructive way. Rogers defines effective counselling as a definitely structured, permissive relationship that allows the client to gain an understanding of him/herself to a degree that enables him/her to take positive steps in the light of his/her new orientation. This hypothesis has a natural outcome that all the techniques used should aim toward developing this free and permissive relationship, this understanding of self in the counselling and other relationships, and this tendency toward positive, self-initiated action (Fall, 2011; Parsons, 2009b; Rogers, 1942).

Possibly the greatest contribution of the indirective technique has been its influence in personalizing counselling. Nevertheless, even though this approach may be more effective in certain counselling situations, it is unlikely that this approach will be used in most schools because of the rigorous training essential to its application in the counselling process (Coleman, 2009).

Eclectic counselling is the result of selecting concepts from both directive and nondirective approaches. Thus, the eclectic counsellor uses whatever approach seems best suited to the situation. Real help given to most students in schools would be located between the highly directive and the eclectic views rather than client-centered (Coleman, 2009; Parsons, 2009c).

How effective a guidance counselor will be in school settings may be more of a function of his/her relationship with members of the school community. If the students see in the counselor, a friend, an advocate and a concerned confidant, they will be happy to open up to him/her even in unusual circumstances.

The implication of this is that apart from currency in global, national and local affairs, the guidance counselor has to keep developing and mastering self-management and people-management skills, if s/he wants to remain relevant in the every changing globalised world (Odeleye 2017).

4. Basic Principles of Guidance

Since the whole mission of the school is guidance, it is expedient that the counselor and other members of the school community need to be abreast of what guidance entails. This will enable the counsellor to appreciate the gravity and scope of his/her work while such knowledge will help the other staff further appreciate the place of the guidance counsellor in the school system.

- **Guidance is for everyone.**

Everyone needs direction! The service is not only for those with life issues but it are also meant for all “normal”, developing children and adults. Just as it is advised that everyone irrespective of health condition should see the physician for check-up, so also it is expedient for everybody from the adolescent years upwards to consult with a trained and certified Counsellor at least twice in a year.

- **Guidance is concerned primarily and essentially with the personal development of the individual.**

The essence of personal development is for the individual to utilize intelligence about the self through systematic personal inquiry. The primary nature of the guidance practitioner’s work is personal development while the primary nature of the teacher’s involvement is the intellectual (mental/cognitive) development of the individual.

- **Guidance and Counselling activities are based on the need and total development of the individual.**

It is the duty of all personnel in a setting to identify the needs of individuals so that programme activities can be designed to meet such needs. Where individual needs are unmet, the guidance programme may be out of course and there may be need for re-evaluation of the entire guidance programme.

- **Guidance is based upon recognizing the dignity and worth of the individual as well as his/her right to make choices.**

Respect is accorded a person because s/he is an individual possessing worth and dignity and because s/he is human. Furthermore, each individual should have a maximum opportunity to select his own purposes in life and choose the means to accomplish these purposes. The Guidance Counsellor’s role is to make the counsellee aware of the possible options and their respective implications; the ultimate choice rests with the counsellee.

- **Guidance is lifelong. Guidance is required all through life.**

We continue to require some form of guidance or the other till death. Guidance is appropriate for both young and old. Nobody is too old to be guided. Even counsellors have periods they will need to sit and be counseled. Guidance and Counselling is a sequential, continuous and developmental process, which starts from birth to death. This means that guidance and counselling runs from the nursery school through primary, secondary to the tertiary institutions. It is not a once-and-for-all event but a process which is an integral part of the total educational programme throughout the school life of an individual.

- **There is interdependence between guidance and the learning process.**

There is a close relationship between counselling activities and the instructional process, each contributing to the other. Counselling can help make the instructional activities to be more relevant and meaningful to the needs of students, while the instructional activities can help to give necessary information and directives to a student in planning his/her life goals. The Counsellor can tailor his/her work in a particular environment to suit the peculiar needs of his/her clientele. In the same light, the teachers can make referrals to the Counsellor; suggestions on the peculiarity of the school can be made to the Counsellor. These would help the Counsellor adapt the guidance services to suit the needs of his/her clientele.

- **All guidance activities must emphasize the will for each student to learn more about him/herself in an accurate and systematic manner.**

Through the use of well-planned instructional strategies and appraisal techniques, individuals can become more knowledgeable about themselves and about the world around them. Without such knowledge, an individual cannot exercise intelligently the rights to free choice in educational, vocational and personal-social fields.

- **Every member of staff in a school and non-school setting should assume responsibility for guidance activities.**

The principal, teachers and counsellors are all members of the guidance team and each member has prescribed functions and roles. This implies that the Counsellor in inaugurating the school Counselling committee would have integrated key members of staff in the team. This would engender positive esprit de corp.

- **Effective leadership is the watchword for any effective guidance and counseling programme.**

Guidance counsellors who are qualified, well-trained and competent are expected to function in schools and other settings. Such professionals would be able to enlist the support of staff members in effecting guidance activities.

- **The guidance counselor and other practitioners should practice within ethical and moral limits.**

The ethical and moral guidelines should be such that clients would feel secure and confident in using the services provided. This also guarantees that counsellors will not use techniques and/or approaches for which they do not have competence.

- **The objectives of counselling should be based on counselees' needs and not on the needs of the counsellors.**

In pursuing such needs of the counsellee, the counsellors must present a positive image and keep encouraging the client on the practicability of positive change.

- **Guidance is oriented towards cooperation not compulsion.**

Students cannot be compelled to submit to guidance. Guidance takes place by mutual consent of individual persons involved. The absence of coercion or pressure is the essence of guidance. When unwilling students are referred to the guidance personnel, the resentment and resistance usually present must be taken into consideration and resolved.

- **The primary mode by which guidance is conducted lies in individual behavior process.**

Since guidance is concerned with personal development, its counsellor's subject matter is the personal world of each student. The guidance counsellor utilizes interviews, counselling relationships and test interpretation sessions, among others, to facilitate a student's understanding of his structure.

5. Outline of Guidance Services

Guidance refers to the whole pedagogical thrust of the school. Simply put, Guidance refers to everything the school does to help the learner maximize the opportunity of being in school. The word Guidance emanates from the word "guide" which is to direct, to lead and to help. Fundamentally, the school is set up to help the learner to gain mastery of himself/herself, understand the world system and transfer such skills to impact the society for the benefit of all.

Guidance services are for everyone in the school system, irrespective of whether the child has problem or not, just as everyone sees a medical doctor, whether ill or well. Also, it is expedient that all school personnel must get involved in the running of the school and fully understand that all duties are interdependent and respect must of necessity be reciprocal. While it is a known fact that counsellors generally don't find it easy penetrating the ranks of teachers and administrators in Nigerian schools, the guidance counsellor must endeavour to endear him/herself to the hearts of both students and staff, using all ethically and socially acceptable means.

At this point, it is also necessary to endeavor to explain what constitute "Guidance Services." They consist of highly specialized activities executed by all members of staff in the school, geared primarily towards helping the individual learner make informed, wise and intelligent choices and decisions in his educational, vocational and personal life. It is believed that if an individual has adequate understanding of him/herself, that is, his/her abilities, values, potentials, interests and goals, and of the world around him/her, s/he would live an effective, productive and happy life. It is hoped that with such understanding, s/he would be able to manage his/her life and live purposefully. This is the thrust of guidance services.

Generally, guidance services in the school system include a combination of services which include orientation services, information services, placement services, counselling services, appraisal services, referral services, follow-up services and evaluation services.

a. Orientation Services

This is usually carried out at the beginning of the school year or as a new student or staff joins the school. This exercise is to facilitate easy and comforting transaction from a familiar environment to a new setting. By so doing, the persons/students are psychologically tutored and prepared for the challenges and demands of the new place. The whole essence of the programme is to enhance positive adjustment of the individuals (students and staff) in their new environment.

b. Appraisal Services

This involves a systematic way of collecting, processing, storing and utilizing information such as would help learners to understand themselves and their educational endeavour as well as enable teachers and other members of staff understand the children. The essence of this service is to scientifically and objectively assess the performance of an individual or group of individuals with a view to knowing how well they have benefitted from an instructional programme. Appraisal services could be before or after exposure to pedagogical content. In most cases, it is situation-specific. It usually results in effective development of the individual toward intelligent decision making and self-actualization.

c. Information/Educational Services

In guidance, the importance of information cannot be overemphasized. Without information, the entire programme is nullity. The success of any guidance programme is anchored on the free flow of information, not only between the professional counselling psychologist and the counsellee/client, but may also involve the significant others. Good information handling is therefore the sole responsibility of the counsellor.

To make well-informed choices, an individual needs relevant, adequate and valuable information about the issue for decision. Information is not only needed for decisions on educational or vocational areas of life, but also to other areas of life that make for its complexity. Such information should be current and useful. Information on health, careers, friendships, sex education, current affairs, study habits and others are expected to be routinely available with the counsellor. The counsellor's ability to get such information and make them available to his client(s) as at when due is a demonstration of his call to duty.

d. Counselling

Counselling helps individuals to get better understanding of themselves and their environment for the purpose of adjustment and attaining optimal personal goals. This is

done in a process whereby the trained individual (the counsellor) assists the individual with a problem or a need (the client) to gain insight into his/her problem and his/her potential to resolve it. It is concerned with the creation of opportunity and conducive environment for educational, vocational, social and personal growth of the individual. In the secondary school system, essentially, emphasis is on three (3) major counselling services, namely, educational counselling, vocational counselling and socio-personal counselling.

e. Planning & Placement Services

Aptitudes, attitudes and dispositions of the learners/individuals are examined with a view to placing them in the world of work (career) where their fullest potentialities would be tapped for their overall adjustment. Placement services facilitate putting the round peg in the round hole. In other words, such services help the individuals to be placed in the appropriate programme of studies or world of work in the face of the global turbulence and conflict today. The Counsellor's role is to assist individuals to develop and attain realistic goals in relation to their vocational and educational goals.

f. Follow-Up Services

It is not enough for the Counsellor to help the counsellee plan the direction of life to adopt and placed in the right vocation. The Counsellor needs to ensure that the client adjusts properly even in the world of work. Follow-up services are the sum of the activities carried out in order to know how well individuals are performing in their various places of assignments. There is opportunity for the client to see the counsellor long after the counselling encounter have been terminated. It is used to determine the effectiveness of planning and placement earlier done. Follow-up helps to know the strength and weakness of individual learners and the curriculum, thus helping in revision when and where necessary.

g. Evaluation

This involves a systematic and corporate assessment of the whole guidance programme in a school to find out whether the stated objectives have been achieved or not and whether the programme meets the developmental needs of the students or not. This will help administrators and planners in making necessary adjustment that is required in order to achieve success in the guidance programme.

h. Referral Services

These are services in which the client either makes him/herself available for counselling (self-referral), or a significant other, out of emotional concern, introduces the individual(s) to the counsellor for professional assistance. Also, the counsellor can refer cases beyond his/her professional competence to more competent hands such as psychiatrist, medical doctor/nurse, parent/guardian or teacher as the case may require.

i. Psychological Testing

Tests are indispensable in school counselling. This is because there is almost always the need for the Counsellor to appraise aspects of the counsellee's personality that may not be so clear during the interactive process. The Counsellor may desire to inquire about the client's aptitudes or there may be need to investigate the intelligence quotient.

Tests are frequently employed to solve problems arising from education or counseling such as classifying pupils according to their abilities in order to identify the intellectually-retarded on the one hand and the gifted on the other. The purpose is to give either group or individual guidance and to diagnose academic failures which may lead to educational and vocational counseling.

Psychological test is also used to identify weak students who are unable to benefit from general teaching at their age-grade, class and sex.

6. Evaluation of Guidance and Counselling Programmes

Evaluation consists of making systematic judgments of the relative effectiveness with which goals are attained in relation to specified standards. In evaluating a function like guidance and counseling services, it is important to determine to what extent the objectives of the service have been attained.

The major objectives of guidance are to assist individual to develop the ability to understand him/herself, to solve his/her own problems, and to make appropriate adjustments to his/her environment as the situation dictates (Gibson, 2008). Evaluation is the means by which school personnel can better judge the extent to which these objectives are being met (Popham, 2010). The ten characteristics cited following provide criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of a school's guidance and counselling services (Cobia, 2007; Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007; Gysbers, 2006).

a. Pupil Needs

Effective guidance programmes are formed to address pupils' needs. Some needs are typical among pupils of a given age; others are specific to certain individuals in particular states or schools. In effective guidance programmes, teachers, counsellors, and administrators listen carefully to what pupils say, because they know they are expressing either personal or situational inadequacies.

b. Cooperation

Everyone involved in the guidance programme works cooperatively. Cooperation is exhibited in the degree of active interest, mutual help, and collaboration among teachers, counsellors, and administrators. It is the duty of Counsellor to enlist administrators, teachers and other key staff into the School Counselling Committee.

c. Process and Product

Effective guidance programmes are concerned with both process and product. The questions "How well is the programme operating?" and "What are the outcomes?" guide the focus in effective guidance programmes. The most important outcome of a guidance programme is desirable change in the behavior of students, such as improved school attendance, better study habits, better scholastic achievement, fewer scholastic failures, lower attrition rate, better educational planning, and better school-home relations.

d. Balance

Effective guidance programmes balance corrective, preventive, and developmental functions. Personnel in such programmes know when to extricate pupils from potentially harmful situations, when to anticipate pupil difficulties, and when to provide assistance necessary to a pupil's maximum development.

e. Stability

The ability to adjust to loss of personnel without loss of effectiveness is associated with programme quality. Stability requires that the system is able to fill vacant positions quickly and satisfactorily.

f. Flexibility

Effective guidance programmes manifest flexibility. Flexibility enables the programme to expand or contract as the situation demands without significant loss of effectiveness.

g. Qualified Counsellors

Counsellors should hold a minimum of Bachelor's degree in Guidance and Counselling.

h. Adequate Counsellor-Student Ratio

Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) requires a counsellor-student ratio of one full-time counsellor to 300 students even though Nigerian public schools generally do not conform to the standard because of large student population and inadequate number of professionally trained counsellors. However, if counsellors are to have adequate time to counsel students individually and in small groups, as well as consult with teachers, administrators, and parents, the CASSON standard has to be complied with.

i. Physical Facilities

Are the facilities for guidance work sufficient for an effective programme? Physical facilities that are well planned and provide for adequate space, privacy, accessibility, and the like are characteristic of quality guidance programmes.

j. Records

Appropriate records are maintained on each student including achievement test scores, information supplied by teachers, administrators, parents, employers, and other professional personnel.

7. Summary and Conclusion

Guidance and counselling services play an integral part in the overall student services department of any elementary or secondary school. The aims of guidance and counselling programmes in schools are to assist individuals to develop the ability to understand themselves, to solve their own problems, and to make appropriate adjustments to their environment. Major guidance services include student appraisal, information giving, placement and follow-up, and counselling.

Broadly conceived, two methods of counselling include directive and nondirective approaches. On the one hand, directive counselling focuses attention on identifying and analyzing the problem and finding an appropriate solution to it using all available data. Nondirective counselling, on the other hand, provides the counsellor not with a neat solution, but instead with the ability to meet her problem in a constructive way.

Ten criteria are used in evaluating guidance and counselling programmes: student needs, cooperation, process and product, balance, stability, flexibility, quality counselors, adequate counsellor-student ratio, adequate physical facilities, and appropriate record keeping.

Given the plethora of guidance and counselling services in the school system, it becomes imperative that the service provider, that the Counsellor has to be competent and up-to-the-task at all times. His/her knowledge and delivery of Guidance and Counselling services must be encyclopaedic and solid so that his/her clients would keep referring others to him/her. S/he needs to keep updating him/herself and ensure that s/he operates within the ambit of the Counselling profession. The burden of effective service delivery is on the Counsellor who must be an assiduous worker with irresistible quest for knowledge. The Counsellor, among several qualities, must be a lover of mankind, someone who delights in the success of others.

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